



JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2025

# CONNECTION

## Family Ties

Championship Trophies

ARTFUL GROUP

GRILLED CHEESE

# Key Choices Ring in the New Year

## Our students begin their paths to the future

**H**appy new year. I hope you had a wonderful holiday season and enjoyed your time with friends and family. Now, we're at a moment for resolutions and contemplating all we'll achieve in the next 12 months.



**JOHNNY  
MCCLANAHAN**  
President/CEO

One particular group will soon reach a significant milestone—graduating from high school. Some members of the Class of 2025 already cemented their plans for the next few years, but others are likely considering the short-term steps that will determine their long-term paths.

As these students begin their final months of high school, I want to thank them and their families for all they do, because these young people will become our community's leaders for decades to come.

In my role with NCTC, I appreciate the opportunities these young people have. We provide the essential communications resources for online education, work-from-home jobs and so much more.

Every day, we see how young people make the most of the digital

tools connecting our community to the world.

Many students complete the early college selection process by late winter. Come spring, others will pick their next destinations. We celebrate these choices because a college education is a wonderful, challenging opportunity. From engineers to physicians, business leaders and so many other professional paths, the road begins with college.

However, that's far from the only option. Traditional colleges won't meet the needs of everyone. Some future members of the workforce will enroll at a community college, trade or technical school, and we applaud these options. The route from high school to high-paying jobs in in-demand fields based on trade school educations may be shorter and much less expensive than traditional college degrees.

What would we do without expert locksmiths, reliable truck drivers, electricians, plumbers and the other tradespeople who make modern life possible? Individuals who invest their time to learn these skills are invaluable.

These are topics close to our hearts at NCTC because the people who install the networks that make our services possible need the training to bring you the highest-quality service. In fact, NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association and Northwood Tech in Wisconsin provide ongoing training and accreditation—including remote classes—to create a foundation for these vital professionals.

Our hope is all our young people have the resources and ability to choose the career best for them. Then, hopefully, they'll be part of our community for generations to come.

As we begin this new year, remember the high school seniors around us face important decisions. As their communications provider, we're proud to offer the powerful internet network linking them to all the resources they need to take their next steps.

May your 2025 be filled with joy. Thank you for letting us serve you.

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North Central is a member-owned corporation dedicated to delivering advanced telecommunications technology to the people of Northern Middle Tennessee and Southern Kentucky, including Macon County, Tennessee, Allen County and Warren County, Kentucky. NCTC also serves portions of Sumner, Trousdale, Smith and Clay counties in Tennessee.

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**On the Cover:**



After more than 45 years in business, Championship Trophy in Lafayette continues to thrive.  
*See story Page 8.*

Photo courtesy of Adrianna Sutton

## WHAT IS CPNI?

A special notice regarding your account information

NCTC knows the importance of privacy to its members. Federal law requires telecommunications companies to explain the use and disclosure of information gathered during the course of providing service.

### WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION?

Customer Proprietary Network Information, or CPNI, are details like the calling features, options and plans to which you subscribe; billing information; and the identity of the long-distance carrier you have chosen. You have the right, and NCTC has the duty under federal law, to preserve the confidentiality of this information.

### HOW IS THIS INFORMATION USED?

We only use CPNI to let you know about changes in services you currently buy from us. With your permission, we may use your CPNI to tell you about other services that may interest you. We will never share your CPNI information with third parties unless required by law.

### HOW DO I PROTECT MY CPNI?

NCTC has tools in place to protect your CPNI information, including passwords.

NCTC is adamant about protecting the privacy of our members, utilizing password-protected accounts to validate that we are speaking with the person authorized on each account.

If you have not set up a password, please call the business office at 615-666-2151.



Photo courtesy of NCTC

Gary Whitaker is the winner NCTC's 2024 Community Service Award for his volunteering and charitable works.

## GARY WHITAKER WINS 2024 NCTC COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

The NCTC Board of Directors recently honored Macon County resident Gary Whitaker as the latest winner of the cooperative's Community Service Award.

The award is a tribute to members who donate their time and energy to helping others. Whitaker was nominated by several people in the community because of his commitment to volunteering in various ways, including his service with Macon Helps, a community help center, food distribution center and thrift store.

"He volunteers numerous days of the week, especially on Mondays when the Second Harvest food truck delivers food for our community," Randy Harston, vice chairman of NCTC's Board of Directors, said at an awards ceremony last fall.

The work Whitaker performs is often physically demanding. It includes heavy lifting, sorting, stocking and performing maintenance on whatever needs fixing, Harston says.

Whitaker also started Santa's Helpers, a program that makes sure children receive Christmas presents. And while he had to step down from that role due to health reasons, Whitaker continues to work with the Macon County Sheriff's Office to provide gifts for children at Christmas.

"Those who nominated him say he has spent countless hours and countless years volunteering his time to help others, but he likes to stay in the background," Harston said during the ceremony. "We get to recognize him and put him in the spotlight for a change."

**Need help paying for services?**

**Lifeline Assistance may be an option for you!**

To find out whether you qualify for Lifeline assistance, please visit [www.checklifeline.org](http://www.checklifeline.org) or call 1-800-234-9473.

# For the Win

## Championship Trophies keeps the legacy alive

Story by JEN CALHOUN



ABOVE: After Mark Shrum's death in 2009, his family, from left, his wife Lynn, his daughter Dana Winkler kept Championship Trophies thriving.

RIGHT: Derrick uses one of the business's several services.

When the late Mark Shrum first opened Championship Trophies in 1979, people all over Lafayette wanted to help. “Mark could light up a room,” says his wife, Lynn. “He made everybody feel special.”

Now, more than 45 years after opening and 15 years after Mark's death, the family business continues to thrive. The secret, they believe, is community.

### IN THE BEGINNING

Championship got its start after Mark and Lynn returned from Cookeville, where Mark had a scholarship to play football at Tennessee Technological University. He was working for Lafayette when a co-worker mentioned running a trophy business in another state.

“He told Mark how to get started and where to get everything he needed,” Lynn says. “That’s how he became interested in the business.”

Over the next few years, the former Macon County High School football star returned to the classroom as a biology teacher, football coach and even a softball coach for his daughter's team. He also

loved staying in shape and even ran a gym from Championship at one time. As part of the Christian strength team Omega Force, he traveled around the region performing at schools and churches.

“He was always grinning, always happy,” Mark and Lynn's daughter, Dana Winkler, says. “He never met a stranger.”

Throughout it all, Mark continued to run Championship with the help of others, including his brother, the late David Shrum; his father, the late Clifton Shrum, and Brad Copas, a talented artist who still works at the shop today.

“Everybody kind of helped, and the business grew through word of mouth,” Lynn says. “Mark knew a lot of people, and David knew a lot of people, so that helped.”

### FAMILY TIES

Over the years, the business grew from selling trophies and plaques for sports teams and competitions to screenprinting T-shirts, uniforms, hats and more. “That was in 1992,” Dana says. “Brad helped with the artwork. People come to see him, because they know how good an artist he is.”

At one point, Mark had handed over the business to his brother, David, to run. Mark was deep into coaching football and couldn't devote as much time to it. But in 1993, David died after a horseback riding accident.

After that, family and friends continued to pitch in to keep the business going. By that time, it had become part of the community, and nobody wanted to see it leave.

The sentiment continued even after Mark died in November 2009. He was diagnosed with colon cancer at 49.

“If you knew Dad, you believed he was going to make it,” Dana says. “He was so sick, but he never complained. Not ever. When you asked him how he was, he said the same thing. He'd always said, ‘Just peachy.’”

### EXPANSION

Despite the losses and tragedies, Championship continued to grow as more family members and friends joined, including Derrick Shrum, Mark and Lynn's son. At some point, they had also added sign making to the business's list of services, which continues to



family, from left, son Derrick, wife Lynn and photos thriving.

several screenprinting machines.



Photos courtesy of Adrianna Sutton

expand with the help of Reggie Hix, their sign maker.

Brad also played a big part in the continuation, too, Dana says. "He's been here through everything, and he has kept the business alive through his hard work," she says. "He has the best personality, and everyone enjoys seeing him. He's also helping grow the business with his ties to Clay County."

A few years after Dana permanently came into the business in 2012, she bought a single-head embroidery machine capable of working on one piece of fabric at a time. It allowed them to sell more items and perform more services.


No matter what they're working on, Championship depends on the reliable broadband service it receives from NCTC. "We deal with graphics so much, that we need something that's fast and reliable," Dana says. "I can't remember there ever being any problems. We've been lucky to have them."

Lynn agrees. "They've got incredible customer service and support, and the people there are great," she says.

Today, the company owns an eight-head embroidery machine and a new building

just to house it. "I do embroidery for local companies and different schools around the region," Dana says. "I also embroider hats for people and companies as far as Nebraska."

Championship also added laser engraving, which allows them to engrave everything from stainless steel to glass, acrylic, leather and wood. "For instance, if you had an old, handwritten recipe," Dana says, "we can engrave that onto a cutting board, and then it can be an heirloom you can pass down."

"It's funny," Lynn adds. "Today, the trophies are the least of what we do. Most of it is screen printing and embroidery. But the name stays the same." 



Engraved wood pieces are mixed among photos of Championship's late founder, Mark Shrum, a beloved sports hero and football coach at Macon County High School.

### TEAM SPIRIT

Championship Trophies offers embroidery, screenprinting and sign-making services in addition to trophies, plaques and other awards. The business is at 205 Scottsville Road in Lafayette. For more information, visit the Championship Facebook page, or email the business at [championship@nctc.com](mailto:championship@nctc.com).

# Artful Enjoyment

## Scottsville Art Guild brings people together

Story by JEN CALHOUN

**D**wight Carter always loved the arts, but he never found time for them while working full-time. But when his granddaughter brought him a few pieces of art that a relative had made, he wasn't sure what to do with them.

"I called Scottsville Art Guild, and they said, 'Bring them to us, and we'll put them on display,'" Dwight says.

From then on, Dwight was sold. He even started showing his own talents, which include sculpting, knife-making and photography. "It's good to reach out to people involved in different types of art," he says. "It's fulfilling, and it's just good for everyone."

### ENCOURAGING ARTISTS

Scottsville Art Guild is a 34-year-old organization that supports local and regional artists of all experience levels through classes, a juried art festival and by hanging members' work in different locations for everyone to see.

"We also work with the school system, day cares and we have a partnership with the public library," says SAG President Jenny Liston.

SAG members pride themselves on participating in local beautification projects like painting murals. The organization is also a mainstay during the Heart of Scottsville First Friday events, where members raise money for the group by doing children's face painting.

Each month, Jenny visits local businesses to hang different pieces created by local and regional artists. "Art is very important," says Marsha Holm, treasurer and one of the longest-serving members of the group. "Today kids only get what is in their



A painting by Nancy Doss hangs at the Summer's End Art Show. The artist went on to win the People's Choice award at the event.

classroom, but we make sure that art is everywhere. You don't have to go to a museum or out of town for art. Just look around your hometown. We're right here."

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE

In addition, SAG offers monthly activities that also serve as meetings. The activities can range from photography lessons to painting classes. The group also offers a children's art bootcamp every summer, and the county's only juried art festival, Summer's End Art Show. It's the only art festival of its kind in the region to allow children's work to be represented.

But artists don't have to be established to find a home with SAG. "When I joined, I joined because I liked photography," says Marsha, who moved to Scottsville from Orlando, Florida, about 20 years ago.

She wasn't quite sure what she was looking for, but she knew she wanted a place to learn and meet other like-minded people. "I remember that a local painter came in for a show, and I was fascinated," Marsha says. "I started taking classes with her in Westmoreland, and that was the first time I ever painted."

In addition to painting, Marsha also does photography and basket weaving. Her award-winning baskets can be found on her Facebook page, Marsha's Holm-Made Creations.

Marsha is happy with the impact the group has made over the years. "We host Summer's End Art Show, and we always teach classes at Allen County Library," she says. "We do about six classes a year there. We usually have an acrylic class, a drawing class, watercolors and a beginning photography class. We usually just get different teachers to teach different mediums of art. They're all free, too."

### HEALING TOUCH

Art is often more than creating something beautiful, says SAG Vice President Vivian McCarthy. "I know people who learned to do art because of some type of trauma," she says. "It can be a way to express yourself and be with other people. It's a way to share, and that's a good thing."

Vivian says people of all ages, genders, art styles and capabilities are welcome to the group. "We have members in Red Boiling Springs and other areas," she says. "It's not just for Scottsville. There are men and women, painters who like oils or acrylics or pastels. We have people who use mixed media, photography, sculpture and applique. It's not just paintings. We're open to all art."

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the art guild lost some momentum because of various closures, canceled events and social distancing requirements. Now, they're trying to re-energize the group by attracting new members. The guild's Facebook page keeps people informed of its latest events and activities.

"It's completely volunteer-run," Jenny says. "Nobody is paid here. But there's so much satisfaction in what I do. I get to share art with the entire community. I also love getting to socialize with everyone." 🗨️



SAG offers art classes about six times a year, as well as monthly activities. Classes can include everything from photography to watercolors.



SAG member Deena Brown stands alongside two of her acrylic paintings.



The works on display for SAG's Summer's End Art Show include this one by Chris Cole.

### ART WORKS

Scottsville Art Guild has been encouraging, instructing and giving back to local and regional artists for 34 years. Monthly activities are free and can include everything from acrylic painting classes to photography classes and much more.

To find out more about SAG's monthly activities, art contest and memberships, follow the Scottsville Art Guild Facebook page. The page also offers a peek at local artists' work. The Summer's End Art Show takes place every August.



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